



For Immediate Release
September 20, 2005

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Families and northern Michigan would benefit with post-Labor Day school start

LANSING – Michigan parents, students and tourism-related business owners would gain by starting schools after Labor Day under legislation approved by the Senate on Tuesday, said Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

Senators approved House Bill 4803, which would require the post-Labor Day start, on a bi-partisan vote. The new starting date would allow parents to take longer trips during the extended weekend without having their children miss school days.

“In addition to allowing families to spend more time together before the school year officially begins, this legislation will be greatly beneficial to the tourism economy of northern Michigan,” Allen said. “Tourism is one of Michigan’s biggest industries and we need to do everything we can to help our local merchants who depend so heavily on tourism for their livelihood.”

Starting school after Labor Day would generate an estimated \$10 million more in tourism-related tax revenue for the state. The added tourism also would create an estimated 2,000 new jobs and between \$100 million and \$200 million in economic activity.

A recent poll out found that nearly two-thirds of Michigan voters said they supported having schools open after Labor Day, showing widespread public support for the change.

Under HB 4803, if a collective bargaining agreement conflicts with the provisions of the bill, it would not apply until after the expiration date of the collective-bargaining agreement.

“I’m proud to support this important and vital piece of legislation for northern Michigan,” Allen said. “I truly hope the governor agrees with the Legislature and a majority of Michigan residents.”

The bill now goes back to the House of Representatives for consideration of Senate changes. If approved by the House, the legislation would then head to the governor.

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Editor’s note: Audio comments from Sen. Allen may be downloaded from the Michigan Senate Republican Majority Multi-Media Link web site at:
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/index.htm>